

Senate Bill No. 600

CHAPTER 282

An act to amend Section 51 of the Civil Code, relating to discrimination.

[Approved by Governor September 8, 2015. Filed with
Secretary of State September 8, 2015.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 600, Pan. Discrimination: citizenship: language: immigration status.

Existing law finds and declares that all protections, rights, and remedies available under state law, except any reinstatement remedy prohibited by federal law, are available to all individuals regardless of immigration status who have applied for employment, or who are or who have been employed, in this state. Existing law, the Unruh Civil Rights Act, provides that all persons within the jurisdiction of this state are entitled to full and equal accommodations in all business establishments regardless of their sex, race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, or sexual orientation.

This bill would extend the protections of the Unruh Civil Rights Act to persons regardless of citizenship, primary language, or immigration status. The bill would specify that those protections do not require the provision of services or documents in a language other than English, beyond that which is otherwise required by law.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 51 of the Civil Code is amended to read:

51. (a) This section shall be known, and may be cited, as the Unruh Civil Rights Act.

(b) All persons within the jurisdiction of this state are free and equal, and no matter what their sex, race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sexual orientation, citizenship, primary language, or immigration status are entitled to the full and equal accommodations, advantages, facilities, privileges, or services in all business establishments of every kind whatsoever.

(c) This section shall not be construed to confer any right or privilege on a person that is conditioned or limited by law or that is applicable alike to persons of every sex, color, race, religion, ancestry, national origin, disability, medical condition, marital status, sexual orientation, citizenship, primary language, or immigration status, or to persons regardless of their genetic information.

(d) Nothing in this section shall be construed to require any construction, alteration, repair, structural or otherwise, or modification of any sort whatsoever, beyond that construction, alteration, repair, or modification that is otherwise required by other provisions of law, to any new or existing establishment, facility, building, improvement, or any other structure, nor shall anything in this section be construed to augment, restrict, or alter in any way the authority of the State Architect to require construction, alteration, repair, or modifications that the State Architect otherwise possesses pursuant to other laws.

(e) For purposes of this section:

(1) “Disability” means any mental or physical disability as defined in Sections 12926 and 12926.1 of the Government Code.

(2) (A) “Genetic information” means, with respect to any individual, information about any of the following:

(i) The individual’s genetic tests.

(ii) The genetic tests of family members of the individual.

(iii) The manifestation of a disease or disorder in family members of the individual.

(B) “Genetic information” includes any request for, or receipt of, genetic services, or participation in clinical research that includes genetic services, by an individual or any family member of the individual.

(C) “Genetic information” does not include information about the sex or age of any individual.

(3) “Medical condition” has the same meaning as defined in subdivision (i) of Section 12926 of the Government Code.

(4) “Religion” includes all aspects of religious belief, observance, and practice.

(5) “Sex” includes, but is not limited to, pregnancy, childbirth, or medical conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth. “Sex” also includes, but is not limited to, a person’s gender. “Gender” means sex, and includes a person’s gender identity and gender expression. “Gender expression” means a person’s gender-related appearance and behavior whether or not stereotypically associated with the person’s assigned sex at birth.

(6) “Sex, race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sexual orientation, citizenship, primary language, or immigration status” includes a perception that the person has any particular characteristic or characteristics within the listed categories or that the person is associated with a person who has, or is perceived to have, any particular characteristic or characteristics within the listed categories.

(7) “Sexual orientation” has the same meaning as defined in subdivision (s) of Section 12926 of the Government Code.

(f) A violation of the right of any individual under the federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-336) shall also constitute a violation of this section.

(g) Verification of immigration status and any discrimination based upon verified immigration status, where required by federal law, shall not constitute a violation of this section.

(h) Nothing in this section shall be construed to require the provision of services or documents in a language other than English, beyond that which is otherwise required by other provisions of federal, state, or local law, including Section 1632.

SEC. 2. The amendment of Section 51 of the Civil Code by this act does not constitute a change in, but is declaratory of, existing law. It is not the intent of the Legislature in amending the Unruh Civil Rights Act to affect the protected status of any other classification, whether or not expressed in Section 51 of the Civil Code.